

**BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Administration of the North American)	CC Docket No. 99-200
Numbering Plan)	
)	

**COMMENTS OF NEUTRAL TANDEM, INC. IN SUPPORT OF
VONAGE'S PETITION FOR WAIVER OF THE COMMISSION'S RULES
REGARDING ACCESS TO NUMBERING RESOURCES**

Neutral Tandem respectfully submits these comments in response to the December 27, 2011 Public Notice in the above-referenced matter. Neutral Tandem is the leading competitive (*i.e.*, non-ILEC) provider of tandem services in the United States. Neutral Tandem provides competitive tandem services in 189 of the 192 LATAs in the continental United States, as well as in Puerto Rico.¹

Neutral Tandem supports the request of Vonage Holding Corporation ("Vonage") for a limited waiver of section 52.15(g)(2)(i) of the Commission's rules to give Vonage direct access to numbering resources. Neutral Tandem's comments are limited to advising the Commission of developments in the market for competitive tandem services that provide further support for Vonage's petition, and that address the concerns raised by some carriers regarding how calls will be routed if the petition is granted.

Specifically, some carriers have expressed a concern that they may need to develop "an alternative way to route calls to and from interconnected VoIP provider phone numbers" if

¹ The only LATAs in which Neutral Tandem does not provide service are LATAs 921, 980, and 981. LATA 921 is comprised entirely of Fishers Island, New York, an island off of the coast of Long Island. LATAs 980 and 981 are comprised of parts of the Navajo Nation.

Vonage's petition is granted.² They base this concern primarily on the fact that the switches of interconnected VoIP providers are not listed in the Local Exchange Routing Guide ("LERG").³

Neutral Tandem believes this concern is largely unfounded. First, Vonage has offered to enter negotiations for direct IP interconnection with other carriers or providers.⁴ Thus, a straightforward solution exists for any carrier that has concerns about routing its traffic to or from Vonage – it can interconnect and exchange that traffic directly with Vonage.

To the extent carriers do not choose to exchange traffic via direct interconnection, market-based solutions exist that will allow carriers to exchange traffic with Vonage via LERG-based routing. Unlike the situation that existed in 2005, when the Commission granted a waiver request allowing SBC Internet Services, Inc. ("SBCIS") direct access to numbering resources, Neutral Tandem and other competitive tandem providers currently offer services allowing competitive local exchange carriers ("CLECs") to designate competitive tandems as the homing tandems for their assigned telephone numbers in the LERG. Neutral Tandem currently provides this service to several CLECs in numerous markets around the country.

Operationally, allowing interconnected VoIP providers such as Vonage to designate alternative tandems in the LERG as the homing tandem for their telephone numbers does not appear to present any unique issues. Traffic to or from telephone numbers assigned to Vonage could be routed in the same manner as traffic already is being routed to or from telephone numbers assigned to CLECs which have designated alternative tandem switches as the homing tandem for those numbers – through the competitive tandem provider.

² December 20, 2011 Letter from Erin Boone, counsel for Level 3 Communications, LLC, at 2-3; *see also* December 22, 2011 Letter from Michael Tenore, counsel for RNK Inc. d/b/a RNK Communications, at 2.

³ *Id.*

⁴ November 11, 2011 Letter from Brita Strandberg, counsel for Vonage, at 6.

When the Commission granted SBCIS direct access to numbering resources in 2005, it required SBCIS to show that it had either: (1) entered into a state commission-approved interconnection agreement with the local ILEC; or (2) ordered interconnection service “pursuant to a tariff that is generally available to other providers of IP-enabled services.”⁵ Vonage has indicated that it is prepared to accept the same conditions imposed on SBCIS if it is given direct access to numbering resources.⁶

Given that market-based alternatives now exist to ILEC tandem interconnection, interconnected VoIP providers such as Vonage should not be restricted to obtaining interconnection services from an ILEC in order to satisfy a “facilities readiness” condition. Rather, those providers should be allowed to obtain those services from alternative tandem providers. If the Commission has any lingering concerns about how carriers would route traffic to or from interconnected VoIP providers, this condition should alleviate any such concerns.

In sum, Neutral Tandem does not believe that the concerns expressed about how carriers would exchange traffic with Vonage provide any reason to deny Vonage’s petition.

Respectfully submitted,
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⁵ See *In re Administration of the North American Numbering Plan*, CC Docket No. 99-200, Order ¶ 10 (Feb. 1, 2005).

⁶ November 11, 2011 Letter from Brita Strandberg, counsel for Vonage, at 3.